

The Planning Process 2

One of the goals of the Southwest Downtown Plan (the Plan) is to incorporate public input into the planning process. This was achieved in three ways. First, a survey of residents, property owners, and business owners in the Southwest Downtown Plan Area (Plan Area) was conducted. Second, neighborhood issues were discussed in a series of public workshops. The final step in the public input process is the Plan adoption process which includes presentation and public hearing on the Plan to the City of Round Rock's Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. The Plan will be adopted as an amendment to the City's General Plan 2000.

Figure 2.1

Survey Respondent Characteristics	
Live in the Plan Area	17%
Own property in the Plan Area	71%
Operate businesses in the Plan Area	75%
Have owned a business or property or lived in the Plan Area less than 10 years	70%

2.1 Southwest Downtown Survey Results

A survey of residents, property owners and business owners in the Plan Area formed the basis for the major issues that needed to be addressed during the public involvement process. A copy of the Southwest Downtown Survey and survey analysis is in Appendix B (Survey Results).

The February 2003 Southwest Downtown Survey had a twenty-two percent (22%) response rate. The chart to the left is a summary of survey respondent characteristics.

Assets

The most commonly mentioned positive feature was the Plan Area's overall appearance. When asked what they liked most about the Plan Area, many respondents mentioned attributes related to its location, such as proximity and convenience to other places and to services. Respondents also noted that the Plan Area is easily accessible. The trees, greenery, and secluded nature of the neighborhood were also mentioned as positive attributes of the Plan Area.

Challenges

The number one concern mentioned in the survey was parking. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents noted it as a challenge for the Plan Area. A second challenge noted was traffic. Streetscape design and improvements, street and alley maintenance, and the need for a balance of commercial and residential property in the Plan Area were also mentioned as significant challenges.

Issues to Discuss in Future Workshops

Survey responses indicated the top three issues to be addressed in were parking, traffic, and conversion of houses to businesses (see Figure 2.2). The Plan will address these issues and recommend mixed-use zoning, outline design guidelines for new development, and formulate a vision for the neighborhood where a mixture of uses is compatible.

Figure 2.2

Southwest Downtown Survey issues to be addressed in the planning process:

Parking	71%
Traffic	63%
Conversion of houses to businesses	54%
Community appearance	50%
Large tree preservation	46%
Historic preservation	42%
Drainage	38%
Municipal Office Complex construction	38%
Sidewalks	33%
Zoning	29%
Changes in neighborhood character/identity	29%
Parks	25%
Crime	21%
Housing opportunities	17%

2.2 Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan Public Workshops

The City's Planning and Community Development Department hosted a total of eleven workshops after the results of the Southwest Downtown Survey were collected. A final open house was held in November 2004 to present a draft of the Plan to the neighborhood before the formal adoption process commenced.

The following is a list of public workshops held at the McConico Building in the Southwest Downtown Plan

Area. Summaries of each workshop were posted on the City's website for the benefit of those not able to attend the workshops. Written summaries of the workshops are included in Appendix C (Public Workshops).

June 3, 2003**Land Use & Zoning**

Discussion of current zoning, land uses, and appropriate and desired future land uses. Voting exercise to assess workshop participant's preferred types of land uses.



Figure 2.3: Presenters discuss street and sidewalk improvements at the July 13, 2004 meeting.

June 24, 2003**Land Use & Zoning**

Discussion of the outcome of the June 3rd land use voting exercise and how the results can be implemented in the planning process through a mixed-use zoning district.

July 15, 2003**Traffic & Circulation**

Brainstorming session on traffic, circulation and street design issues.

August 4, 2003**Traffic & Circulation**

Possible solutions for traffic, circulation and street design issues.

September 16, 2003**Civic Design: Streets, Sidewalks & Parking**

Discussion of street widths, street parking arrangements, sidewalks and streetscapes relating to improvements scheduled to begin in 2005. Consultants Carter Design Associates present their analysis of Plan Area street characteristics.

October 21, 2003**Civic Design**

Carter Design Associates present their analysis of features that strengthen area character. Neighborhood preferences assessed regarding the streetscape plan and district design guidelines.

November 18, 2003**Defining Parameters for Mixed-Use Zoning**

Discussion of parameters necessary to preserve a pleasant environment in a mixed-use district, including setbacks, density and compatibility issues. Design issues relating to the Plan Area's character are also discussed.

February 3, 2004**Development Standards**

A draft outline of development standards for the Plan Area is presented, based on previous input.

April 6, 2004**Development Potential**

Charles Heimsath of Capitol Market Research, a noted consultant on Central Texas property values and land use, discusses development potential in the Plan Area.

July 13, 2004**Street Layout, Utilities & Drainage**

Architects and Engineers from PageSoutherlandPage present their designs for utility and street improvements in the Plan Area. Staff assesses support for suggested changes to the street layout with a vote.

September 21, 2004**Summary of the Vision of the Southwest Downtown Plan**

Summary of Southwest Downtown Plan components, including parameters of the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning District, street improvements, utility and parking plans, and proposed street layout changes.

November 17, 2004**Presentation of Draft Plan to Neighborhood**

A draft of the Southwest Downtown Plan is presented at a neighborhood open house.

After review by the neighborhood, the Southwest Downtown Plan is presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation and to the City Council for adoption as an amendment to the City of Round Rock General Plan.